

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

and of John R. Rice

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20.

An Independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Sin, Modernism, and Denominational Overlordship

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Office: 207 So. Beckley St., Phone 6-6888

HEAVEN: Sweet Home of The Lord Jesus and Departed Saints

By John R. Rice

BIBLE EVIDENCE:

- (1) That Heaven is a Very Real, Literal, Physical Place.
- (2) That the Redeemed Go Immediately to Heaven at Death.
- (3) That There People Retain Their Identities and Personality, With Perfect Consciousness. That They Remember, See, Hear, Talk, Are Comforted and Rejoice!
- (4) That They Know What Goes on on Earth, Are Intensively Interested. Rejoicing in the Victory of Saints and the Salvation of Souls.
- (5) That to Leave Earth For Heaven is a Glorious Triumph, An Entering Into Rest and Into the Presence of Christ, Great "Gain" for the Christian, "Far Better" Than to Remain Here.
- (6) That the Way to Heaven Through Christ is So Plain One May Have Sweet Assurance and Know Beyond a Doubt Heaven is His Home and His Soul Eternally Safe!

"1. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"2. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

"4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

"5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

"6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

— John 14:1-6.

How real Heaven was to many of the saints of ages past! "Oh,

sing to me of Heaven when I am called to die," they sang. I can remember many times in my youth I heard Christians sing with tears streaming down their faces.

"I have a mother over yonder, I have a mother over yonder, I have a mother over yonder, On the other bright shore.

"Some glad day I'll go and meet her, Some glad day I'll go and meet her,

Some glad day I'll go and meet her, On the other bright shore."

They sang it many times as they solemnly shook hands from one to another in little churches, sang it while tears of joy ran down their faces. Other verses were, "I have a father over yonder," or brother or sister, and last of all, "I have a Saviour over yonder." It was very real to them.

"There'll be no sorrow there, There'll be no sorrow there, In Heaven above, where all is love,

There'll be no sorrow there"

was another song my mother sang, and the memory of it is sweet to my soul.

The saints of God in other days seemed really to stand "On Jordan's stormy banks," and "cast a wishful eye; to Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie." And to many of them the last stanza of the old hymn written by Samuel Stennett seemed to express a sincere heart-longing.

"When shall I reach that happy place,

And be forever blest?

When I shall see my Father's face,

And in His bosom rest?"

When you come to think of it, how many songs they used to sing were about Heaven! "In the Sweet By and By," "When We All Get to Heaven," "Oh, Come, Angel Band," and the magnificent "Glorious Song," sung around the world in the Torrey-Alexander meetings had their tremendous hold on the hearts of the people, no doubt, because of the happy hope they expressed for Heaven. The human heart longs for an assurance of a blessed, immortal place where the good, the forgiven and blessed are at home with God; when sin and disappointment and human failure and heartache and disease and

death are forever ended.

It seems that in recent years there has been more confusion in the minds of the people about Heaven and less understanding of the Bible doctrine concerning that glorious place. For one thing, "isms" and false cults have increased to confuse the minds of the people. For another, there has been a great decrease in preaching about death, Hell, Heaven and judgment. Modernism and worldliness have discouraged the flabby, soft-living hirelings of the pulpit in preaching about death and the things which follow death. But you cannot leave off Hell without leaving off Heaven. You cannot ignore or evade the fate of the unrepentant sinner and teach the saints the glories that await the redeemed of God. The so-called "Social Gospel" lays stress upon this life, not the next. In many quarters it is now regarded as very old fashioned and passé to urge people to prepare to die. Social security, better housing, relief for tenant farmers, better living conditions for the poor, and the care of underprivileged children have occupied so much of the teaching and preaching of these modern days that preachers have left poor, hungry-hearted people ignorant about Heaven. We ought to think about Heaven far more than we do. Saints should rejoice because their names are written in Heaven and think much of the joy that is in Heaven over one sinner that repents. Sinners should be continually warned that they will miss the eternal joys and glories of Heaven and will, like the rich man, lift up their eyes in Hell, being in torment, if they do not repent. This world is only an anteroom of the next. This short life is incidental compared with eternity. This world is not home to the Christian. Here we are only sojourners, temporary dwellers in a land that is not ours. Our citizenship is in Heaven. Our treasure should be in Heaven and our thoughts should dwell lovingly and longingly for that sweet home of the departed saints and of our Saviour and our Heavenly Father.

I. Heaven Is A Real, Literal, Physical Place

When Jesus sent Judas away from the upper room with the words, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27), and Satan entered into Judas so that he, burning with hate, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and when Jesus finally convinced the eleven remaining disciples that He was to be crucified the next day, it was the darkest hour any of them ever saw! With dumb misery they huddled near Jesus. To them, beyond doubt there seemed only an unknown blackness. Misery and death filled their hearts. So to comfort them the dear Saviour told them about Heaven. He said,

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jno. 14:2, 3).

So Heaven is a place. Jesus called it that twice. He has gone to prepare this place. It is in the Father's house of many mansions. We do not know how the darkened minds of the eleven disciples re-

acted to this comforting word of Jesus when He commanded them, "Let not your heart be troubled," because of the Heavenly place with many mansions in the Father's house. Doubtless the dear Saviour Himself, facing the torments of Gethsemane, His betrayal, His desertion by the disciples, His trial before the Sanhedrin and Pilate, and the agonies of the cross, was Himself sweetly comforted by the remembrance of the happy place to which He was going and where He would prepare many mansions for His own redeemed. Certain it is that countless millions of Christians have learned not to let their hearts be troubled as the sweet realization of Heaven as an actual and blessed place came home to their hearts.

Do not think of Heaven, then, as a ghostly, unreal, indefinite state. Rather, it is a real place, a place as literal and concrete as the house you sit in today, as physically real as the city in which you live. Human telescopes cannot see on what distant planet or star is the paradise of God, wherein the tabernacle of God with its streets of gold and gates of pearl Jesus is preparing the many mansions for His own. But though human eyes are too dim to reach it, it is there, a physical place.

We must remember that Jesus went to Heaven with a physical body. His body came out of Joseph's new tomb. To His astonished disciples who were afraid when they saw Him, Jesus said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). He said, "It is I myself: handle me, and see" (Luke 24:39). He invited poor, doubting Thomas to "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). Later, John, the beloved, in writing of Him spoke of Jesus as the One "which . . . our hands have handled" (1 John 1:1). Long later, when the resurrected and glorified Jesus met the aged John on the isle of Patmos and gave him the revelation, Jesus laid His hand, His physical hand, upon the head of John. I say, Jesus in Heaven has a physical body, a body of flesh and bones, a body of material substance. When Jesus ascended to Heaven from the mount of Olives, there stood by the disciples two men in white apparel which said,

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Note that they said, "This same Jesus." The Jesus in Heaven is not another but the same. The Jesus who will return for His saints is not another but the same. When He comes again to Jerusalem, Jews will look on Him whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10). They will say, "What are these wounds in

thine hands?" and He will answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). Jesus now has hands and feet, the same hands and feet with which He went away, hands and feet with the blessed marks of nails! And this same Jesus now abides in Heaven with a physical body. I tell you that Heaven, then, must be and is a real, literal, physical place!

Enoch in Heaven has a physical body. He never died. Rather, we are told, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

Elijah also is in Heaven with a physical body. Of all the race of mankind, the only two who ever went to Heaven without dying were Enoch and Elijah, and these two were translated, that is, changed while yet alive, and simply, physically transferred to Heaven. We are told that with chariot and horses of fire, Elijah was carried to Heaven in a whirlwind (II Kings 2:11). Therefore, we know there are at least three beings in Heaven: Jesus, Enoch, and Elijah who have physical bodies.

It is at least possible, perhaps probable, that even the others in Heaven are temporarily clothed with some kind of human bodies, awaiting the resurrection of their own bodies. As to that, we cannot say. However, we do know that when Moses appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Elijah to talk with Jesus, he appeared visible to the sight of the disciples.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

\$3,000 Cash In Ninety Days

Foundation Done, Bids Asked; May Enter Building By July 31

At a meeting of the large building Committee of the Fundamental Baptist Church, Dallas, last Sunday afternoon, it was unanimously voted to ask for bids for the construction right away of the first section of our church building, a section 74 by 90 feet, two stories in height. The foundation is completed and ready. The Committee also decided to recommend to the church that we set a goal of \$3,000 cash to raise in ninety days, one thousand dollars a month, with the hope that we can get the building completed in time for our anniversary July 31. Sunday night the church heartily and unanimously accepted the plan and agreed to try to raise the amount suggested.

The foundation has been paid for in cash and there is more than \$1,600 in the bank. If we raise \$3,000 addition the church can easily borrow the balance necessary to complete the first section of the building.

We know that it will take sacrificial giving to raise a thousand dollars a month besides our rent, our missionary salary and all our general expense, but with God's help we can do it if we sacrifice. Let every member and friend prayerfully seek the will of God and ask His blessing. How much will you do each month for three months?

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With the Editor Here and There

Last Thursday the editor drove to McComb, Mississippi, stopping at Shreveport, Louisiana, with friends Mr. and Mrs. Dedman of the Tri-state Hospital. With Bro. Evans as pastor they have begun a promising Christian work which we trust will grow into a great soul winning church. We had prayer in the attractive tabernacle after a fine dinner together. At McComb we found that Navilla Baptist Church was expecting me to preach, so I arrived at the full church and began the sermon at 9:28 p.m. None had gone home, they said. There were four happy professions of faith. At urgent request of pastor and people we stayed and I preached again Thursday night, when God graciously saved another young man.

We picked up the Navilla pastor, Rev. Robert Hughes, at Mississippi Baptist College at Clinton, with another young minister, Brother Henry Miles. Brother Hughes is graduating this term from the college with highest honors. He is a remarkable Bible teacher, a real student, a soul winner and a successful pastor. Our fellowship was delightful. Several homes entertained us, (Mrs. Rice, two helpers and I). Brother Gill, pastor of the East McComb Baptist Church greeted us kindly.

With the two pastors and a number of interested Christians we discussed plans for a city-wide re-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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207 South Beckley Dallas, Texas

HEAVEN: Sweet Home of the Lord Jesus . . .

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We are told that, "And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus" (Mark 9:4). Moses who had died and his body was buried by the angel of God (Deut. 34:5, 6) appeared visibly to the disciples. Samuel, when he was called back from the dead, appeared visibly to Saul and to the witch of Endor (I Sam. 28:12). In Hell the rich man saw Abraham and saw Lazarus in his bosom (Luke 16:23). John saw "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9). If the souls now in Heaven do not have physical bodies, they certainly appeared visibly to men. I tell you that Heaven is a real, physical place, as concrete and literal as the city you live in, with physical properties and dimensions, made of material substance. Praise God that Heaven is real and that Jesus is there preparing a real place, real mansions for His redeemed so that where He is, we may be also.

II. Heaven Immediately Follows Death For Christians

Among many unscriptural doctrines invented by Roman Catholic church leaders is the doctrine of purgatory or limbo. Catholics teach that at death the souls of ordinary Christians descend to purgatory. The loved ones of the departed are taught that they should pay the priest to say masses for the dead and pray for the souls that are in purgatory. Eventually, if enough masses are said and prayers uttered, they are taught that the soul may pass from purgatory into Heaven. But that wicked doctrine is not taught in the Bible. It is based on a doctrine of salvation by works and salvation by the church instead of redemption by the blood of Christ. It is used to extort money from many who hope to shorten the period of suffering of their loved ones that they may the sooner enter Heaven. But there is not one word in the Bible to indicate that anybody at death goes to an intermediate state between Heaven and Hell. No such thing is even mentioned in the Bible. The term "purgatory" and "limbo" are not found in the Word of God nor any other term of similar meaning.

There are others who teach soul-sleeping. They teach that at the death of a Christian, the soul is put to sleep and does not wake until the resurrection of the Christian's body. Perhaps that idea arose from the Bible use of the word "sleep" for the death of a Christian. First Thessalonians 4:14 says that at the coming of Christ to raise the Christian dead and receive the Christian living to Himself, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Also, it is said of Stephen that "he fell asleep" at his death (Acts

7:60). However, it is only the body that sleeps. The body rests. Those mortal, physical eyes do not see nor the ears hear nor the tongue speak nor the brain know. The bodies of Christian saints are asleep, safe in the arms of Jesus our Lord who will raise them up at His coming. Many, many Scriptures make it clear that the soul of a Christian does not sleep at death. Death for the Christian does not mean oblivion, does not mean darkness nor forgetfulness, but the entering in of a bright new day of perfect and glorious life.

Sweet assurance of this truth is given us in the case of the dying thief. Luke 23:39-43 tells us how the repenting thief turned to Jesus on the cross beside him and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." No doubt he had in mind the truth so clearly taught in the Old Testament, that the Messiah would sit on David's throne at Jerusalem and reign over Israel in Palestine. When the Saviour was promised to Mary, the angel Gabriel said, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33). Jesus is now seated in His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). But "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). The dying thief had made an utter failure of this life, he confessed. Acknowledging his sin and appealing to Jesus as the Lord, he begged, "Remember me!" This criminal did not know much about Heaven but he did know about the promised kingdom of Christ, the Messiah. With loving forgiveness Jesus turned to the penitent sinner and promised salvation not only in the distant day of His kingdom but that very day. "Today," said Jesus, "shalt thou be with me in paradise." That very day the dying thief entered into the paradise of God with Jesus. In the sweet term to which we are accustomed, he entered Heaven that day. There are those who believe that paradise and Heaven are not the same, but they are mistaken. On the cross that day Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Jesus went to be with the Father and the dying thief went with Him that very day into Heaven! The Apostles' Creed quoted by many, states that Jesus died and "descended into Hell." In the English language that statement is misleading. When Psalms 16:10 says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," speaking about Jesus, it literally means that God would not leave the spirit of Jesus in the place of the dead, a very general term which included both Heaven and Hell under the Hebrew word *sheol*. The Father received Christ's spirit and the spirit of the dying thief the very day they died.

"Enoch walked with-God: and he was not; for God took him." Thus in simple language we are told how Enoch went to Heaven. God took him, so Enoch went to be with God at once.

When Elijah went to Heaven, he, like Enoch, took his body with him and he went to Heaven at once, without any sleeping of soul, without any intermediate state. II Kings 2:11 tells us,

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Jesus in Luke 16:19-31 gives an even clearer teaching, that the soul of a Christian at death goes immediately to Heaven and that the soul of the unconverted goes immediately to Hell. There a rich man is pictured who fared sumptuously every day and a beggar, named Lazarus, laid at his gate full of sores. "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," Jesus said. "The rich man also died, and was buried: And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:22, 23). The real Lazarus (not that poor, frail, diseased body, but his spirit) was carried by the angels of God straight home to Heaven where Abraham was. And Christ revealed the conversation

that took place between Abraham in Heaven and the rich man in Hell immediately after Lazarus and the rich man died. No soul-sleeping there! And no purgatory there, either, for the words of Abraham to the rich man are given us as follows:

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

And Paul says that to be absent from the body for a Christian is to be present with the Lord. In II Corinthians 5:8 he says by divine inspiration,

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Every saint that is absent from the body, then, is present with the Lord Jesus in Heaven. At death the soul of the Christian is carried by the angels of God straight home to Heaven where Christ is and where the Father is.

III. Christians Know Each Other In Heaven

Does personality extend beyond the grave? Do those we love retain those definitely personal characteristics by which we may know them, when they go to be with the Lord and leave these bodies of clay? Thank God, we may answer with perfect assurance, "Yes!"

Whatever we have yet of human weakness and sin after being born again will be left behind surely when the soul finds itself in the likeness of Christ on being carried by the angels to Heaven at death. We will lose our sin and whatever remains of the carnal and sinful nature. But, thank God, otherwise our personalities will be identical. The imperfect will be made perfect. The incomplete will be completed. That which is lacking will be supplied. Yet those who rejoice in the presence of Christ will be literally and truly the same people as loved ones knew here on earth. Abraham on earth is still Abraham in Heaven! Lazarus, the poor beggar, was sick; now he is well. He was only a beggar; now he is rich. He was in pain; now he is comforted. Yet he is the same Lazarus and was instantly recognized by the rich man who looked up from Hell.

Do the saints in Heaven know each other? Assuredly they do! In I Corinthians 13:12 the Holy Spirit gives us this inspired statement,

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Ah! in Heaven they know each other better than people ever know each other on earth. On the earth "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7). The dearest friends and loved ones here often misunderstand us. They cannot know the desires and motives of our hearts. We misjudge people because we can see them only through a glass darkly. We may see their faces, we may hear their words, but how imperfectly these reveal the heart within! No one of us can look at a friend and judge surely whether he lies or speaks the truth. Many a time a mother, a father, a wife or sweetheart yearns in vain to express the love that is humanly past expressing. Only in Heaven will we really know how some people really love us. Only in Heaven will we know how deep was the penitence of others for sin and how desperately they longed to do right who appeared not to try. I say, here we only see through a glass darkly. Then we will see face to face.

In Heaven not only will we know those we knew on earth, but we will know others also. No one will need to introduce me to Paul or to David or to good Barnabas or the martyr Stephen or sweet Mary!

The disciples recognized Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration.

The rich man in Hell recognized Lazarus and Abraham when he saw them together in Heaven.

People in the next world, both the saved in Heaven and the lost in Hell, retain all their senses. Though their bodies are yet in the grave, they see as if they had eyes,

they hear as if they had ears and they speak as if they had tongues and lips. The rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus. They heard one another speak. The rich man felt the torment of Hell. Lazarus was comforted as sensibly as the rich man was tormented. We foolishly think that the eyes see. They do not. It is the soul that sees, using the eyes for windows. Human, physical ears do not hear. They are merely physical instruments which the soul can use while clothed in these physical bodies, but the soul can hear without ears. We say that the tongue speaks, but it is not the tongue that speaks. It is the person back of the tongue. These organs of clay in the human body have no senses when their master, the soul, is departed. God is a spirit and yet "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chron. 16:9). God is a spirit and yet the voice of God spoke from mount Sinai, "And God spake all these words" (Exo. 20:1). I say that in Heaven our loved ones who have gone to be with Christ see and hear and speak and sing and rejoice! Life is fuller and richer and more glorious, more real with the saints in glory than with the saints on earth.

After we have received the wit-

ness of the Scriptures, it is sweet to remember the testimony of a multitude of dying saints. How many times some Spirit-filled Christian on a deathbed has rejoiced, has heard the singing of angels, has seen the Lord Jesus and saints gone on before. Dying Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God in Heaven, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." That was not hallucination, that was real. Stephen actually saw Jesus Christ and said so before he died.

How well I remember thirty-eight years ago when my mother lay dying. Around the room her husband and children and kinspeople looked on and wept while mother rejoiced. I remember how she urged us to promise that we would meet her in Heaven and we did. I remember, though less than six years old at that time, how mother asked my cousin to sing and play,

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His
excellent word!"

My mother rested wholly on the Rock that day and it did not tremble beneath her dying feet! My mother walked through the valley of shadow that day and feared no evil for Christ was with her! I remember her happy face,

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so pale and yet so sweet and beautiful! I remember the long black braid of hair that lay along her pillow. Then my mother, filled with the Spirit, looked up and saw what we could not see. She said so clearly that I remember it word for word and have never forgotten it — "I can see Jesus and my baby now!" Then mother closed her eyes and her body went to sleep but the angels carried her straight home to the bosom of God and to hold her dear baby to her heart again! My mother recognized Jesus. More than that, she recognized her baby. I am sure that instantly in Heaven she recognized every saint she saw there.

So multitudes of other dying saints have given their brief testimony.

My stepmother's father sang and sang on his deathbed and heard the sweet voices of angels and recognized his wife who had preceded him into glory. So multitudes of dying saints have given

their testimony too. In that brief time when the gates of glory were left ajar to receive them and before they breathed the last human breath, they recognized inhabitants of glory.

Thank God, we will know each other in Heaven. Heavenly recognition is proven by the Bible and witnessed by blessed testimonies of those who have looked within the gates.

IV. Saints In Heaven Observe Us On Earth With Complete Knowledge and Eager Interest

After my mother died, one evening my sister and I sat out in the moonlight on the stone doorstep of Aunt Nannie's home and looked up at the stars. We talked about mother; did she look upon us? Did she care? Did she love us still? We wondered upon what bright star or whether on the pale yet brilliant moon our mother was happy with the Lord. No doubt the same questions, too deep for childish minds to put into words, have raised themselves in millions of hearts. Do our loved ones in Heaven know what goes on on the earth? And again, thank God, I can say with assurance and prove by the Word of God that they do know! And that they do care! Some thoughtless one will answer, "How could a mother in Heaven be happy if she knew that her son on earth went on in sin, rejecting Christ and perhaps know that he died unconverted and went to Hell? How could people in Heaven be happy if they knew all the sadness and wickedness, all the disease and crime and failure, all the war and divorce and sin of this poor, wicked world?"

But let me ask you another question which will answer this one. How can the Lord Jesus in Heaven be happy? Surely He knows all things here. He looked into Hell and heard the cries of the rich man

tormented in flame. And He, with God the Father, knows the fall of every sparrow and numbers every hair on every human head. He looks at the heart of every unrepentant sinner and He grieves at the mistakes and failures of every Christian. Can Jesus be happy in Heaven? We know that the Scripture answers that "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). We know that Jesus on earth looked forward to the joy in Heaven for we are told about Him that "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). Yes, Jesus is happy in Heaven, knowing all the wickedness of this world. And so are the saints in Heaven. The trouble with all these doubters is simply this: they are measuring saints in Heaven by the standards of poor, carnal earth-minded Christians. I am burdened for sinners to be saved, and yet, oh, the joy of the Lord that sometimes fills my soul even here on earth! and so much more when I awake in His likeness! You may be sure, dear Christian, that when you get to Heaven you will be perfectly satisfied and happy with everything that the Lord Jesus does. And when, at the last judgment, the Lord Jesus sends sinners away forever to the lake of fire, unrepentant sinners, sinners who would have nothing to do with Jesus, sinners who rejected the pleadings of the Spirit, sinners who trampled under their feet the blood, then every mother will say, "Amen," to the just condemnation of her boy. Then every wife will turn away comforted concerning her unsaved husband who would not be saved. And God Himself shall wipe away all her tears and there will be no more crying or sighing or pain, "for the former things are passed away." Certainly, in Heaven, they know what goes on here on earth. That is made clear by many Scriptural illustrations.

First, there is the case of Samuel who died. King Saul, backslidden and out of the will of God, went to the witch of Endor and asked that Samuel might be brought back to advise him. I know that witchcraft and spiritualism were forbidden of God. I do not know why God allowed Samuel to appear in person to Saul in that case but I know that He did. Perhaps God worked it altogether to suit Himself without the witch. Certainly she seemed startled when she saw Samuel. And there we find that Samuel who had already gone to Heaven, returning, knew just what was happening on earth. In fact, he knew more — he knew what would happen on the morrow. In I Samuel 28:16-19 the Scripture tells us what Samuel said to Saul. "Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?"

"And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:

"Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day.

"Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

Samuel knew what went on on earth and knew why. He knew the sin of Saul, knew the purposes of God, knew what would happen on the morrow. Surely this is evidence that saints in glory know what goes on on the earth.

The rich man in Hell looked with the deepest concern upon the affairs of the earth. He said, "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." He knew that his brethren had not repented. And Abraham in Heaven knew more about it than the rich man did and said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from

MOTHER

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the dead." How strange, how strange that both Heaven and Hell look on with such intense concern for the conversion of the wicked here on earth while we that are here and have an opportunity to warn them do so little about it!

When Moses and Elijah met Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, what do you suppose they talked about? Did Jesus speak with longing concerning the glories of Heaven for which He was homesick? Did Moses tell Him of sweet conversations in Heaven? Did Elijah report on the songs they sang and their praises? No, these heavenly beings spoke of the things that were to transpire on earth. They "spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). The saints in Heaven knew what Jesus was doing on earth, knew the course of events that led straight to the cross. Eagerly they talked with the Lord Jesus about His death that He would "accomplish" (not a death that would overcome Him unwillingly) in Jerusalem. Can't you see that in Heaven they know what goes on on earth?

One of the clearest Scriptures on this matter is Revelation 6:9-11 which says,

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Here John saw the souls in Heaven, the souls of those that had been slain because of their Christian testimony. They had not yet received resurrection bodies. But gathered below the altar of the temple in Heaven they cried out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The saints in Heaven see the war, the persecution of Christians, the injustice, the wickedness on every hand. Their poor hearts cry out that sin be punished and that saints be avenged by the hand of God. These in Heaven look on with great concern and see the course of events in this world. But, thank God, they are not left in ignorance nor in grief.

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:11).

God tenderly explains to the saints in glory how things will turn out here on earth. Heavenly instructors show them that they need not grieve, that in the end sin will be punished and right will be rewarded and that Christ will reign! Let us praise God that the souls of the saints in Heaven look down upon us here on earth with the deepest concern. As Abraham and Lazarus knew about the rich man in Hell and as the souls in Heaven

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

With the Editor Here and There

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

vival campaign about which many have been praying. Plans are incomplete. There seems to be some leading, however, that I should come to McComb for such a revival, that it should be in July, and that it should seek the cooperation of all sound churches, but be officially sponsored by none.

Monday and Tuesday were spent at Kingman, Kansas, in a Bible Conference with pastor Theodore Epp and the Zion Mennonite Church. Pastor Robert Means of the First Baptist Church spoke twice, other good men spoke, and I spoke five times. With the building packed and some standing outside, and others turned away, Tuesday night the Lord saved nine. There was an unusual hunger on the part of the people for the word of God, and they heard me gladly and urged me on until I spoke far beyond the usual time. The fellowship of Bro. Epp and Mrs. Epp, Bro. and sister Means and others was very sweet. Several hundred books and pamphlets were bought, and several subscribed for *The Sword of the Lord*.

There were some remarkable answers to prayer last night (Tuesday). A dear old woman, Mrs. Dotson, mother of two preachers, past eighty years old, subscribed some time ago for *The Sword of the Lord* for Mr. John Wilson, of Cunningham, Kansas, hoping that he would be saved. Yesterday evening friends asked Mr. and Mrs. Wilson to come with them to the services at Kingman, fourteen miles away. Mrs. Wilson had intended to go to her lodge, but came to church. Her husband was gloriously saved, and then she came with happy tears to tell me the story: "I am so glad I came here instead of to the Lodge," she said. A dear old saint of God had her prayers answered. Mr. Wilson had gotten convicted, got to listening to Charles Fuller on the radio, prayed, and last night, after a struggle, claimed Christ as His own, publicly and happily. The moral is, subscribe for *The Sword of the Lord* for unsaved ones and others and then pray! Nearly everywhere I go someone makes a profession of faith who has been convicted or saved through reading *The Sword of the Lord*.

Yesterday afternoon I spoke on prayer. Afterward two young women came to me to confess that they had been praying for God to save some loved ones, but that the prayer had not been definite nor urgent that God would do it now, at once, and at any cost. They went home and prayed that two fine brothers would come to the service that night and that both would be saved. Not knowing of their prayer, I suppose, the mother came forward in the service weeping to ask prayer for her two sons. The two came together to surrender to Christ and claim him and there was great rejoicing.

Brother Epp on May 1 begins a regular radio broadcast at Lincoln, Nebraska, five days a week, Monday through Friday, on station KFOR, 1210 kc., at 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. Those near will hear, we trust, and all of us can pray that God will bless the broadcast in this needy field. It will be the only daily religious broadcast in the state of Nebraska.

Today, Wednesday, I am at Enid with Brother T. Myron Webb, and will speak here tonight and Thursday night. Brother Webb has been greatly blessed in the work, and broadcasts daily on the Oklahoma Network with five stations, at 9:30 a.m. daily.

God gives peace and grace in many duties. Praise His name. The article on Heaven was dictated as I drove from Mississippi last Saturday.

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

knew about the course of events on earth, so our beloved dead who are alive in Christ know what we do here day by day.

And what is the chief concern of the saints in Heaven? Is it hard for you to know? Why, we may be sure their interest is just the same as the Saviour's interest. His concern is chiefly for souls to be saved. That, too, is the concern of heavenly saints. Remember that Jesus said,

"I say unto you, that like-

wise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). And again He said,

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

Who is in the presence of the angels? We may be sure that the Lord Jesus is and that He rejoices over souls saved. But re-

member that there, too, are the saints. They are with Christ. The angels are their ministering spirits. It was the angels that carried them there to Heaven. And I think that Jesus meant that redeemed saints in glory shout with rejoicing and praise God over every sinner that repents on earth!

In Hebrews the 11th chapter God gives us an honor roll of the heroes of faith: "By faith Abel . . ." "By faith Enoch . . ." "By faith Noah . . ." "By faith Abraham . . ." etc., with Isaac and Jacob and Sara and Gedeon and Barak and Samson and Jephthae and un-

named martyrs of the faith of whom the world was not worthy! And then the wonderful climax of the chapter is found in Hebrews 12:1, 2:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ."

Compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses! The word "witnesses" here might mean that these are martyrs who testify to us. But in view of the fact that they are said to compass us about, and in view of the many other Scriptures that teach on this point, we may be sure that all the saints and heroes of God cluster around the banisters of Heaven and gaze with the deepest concern upon us left here to run our race! And the force of the argument is that since the grandstand of glory is filled with so many eager observers we should lay aside every sin and the besetting sin of unbelief and look to Jesus to complete our faith and run with patience our race! These sainted millions have run their race, they have fought their fight, they have finished their course. Now they watch on the sidelines as we take their places. Oh, Christians! in view of this multitude who compass us about and watch us, let us run a good race! That, I believe with all my heart, is the sense of this Scripture. I tell you that heavenly saints know what goes on here on earth. They know like Jesus knows. They see, not through a glass darkly, but face to face. God has, I believe, no secrets from his beloved who are entered into His presence and rejoice in His courts.

Recently, because of the sudden death of someone very dear to me, Heaven has been most real. My thoughts recur again and again to my mother in Heaven.

I never knew until I was a grown man that my mother had wanted me to be a preacher. One day in Amarillo, Texas, in the home of my dear Aunt Esse, my mother's sister, we looked through an old book and there fell out a letter. I knew the handwriting at once for I had seen her maidenhood's love letters to my father. The handwriting was that of my mother. The letter was written when I was four years old, a year or two before her death. She wrote, as mothers will, about husband and children. Her baby (who soon preceded her to Heaven) was doing better, she thought. And Gertrude, the older girl, was good to help mamma in drying dishes and minding the baby, she said. Ruth with her blond curls, was very quiet and sweet. George, my younger brother, was into mischief from morning to night! And then she said, "And my little preacher boy is just getting along fine. The other day he said . . ." And I looked up startled to my aunt. She had named everybody else but me; I was her "preacher boy!"

"Did she call me that?" I asked. And Aunt Esse answered, "She never called you anything else!"

A little later when I saw my father I told him the incident and he said very gravely, "Yes, when you were born we gave you to God and we prayed that God would make you a preacher." I remembered then that when I was four years old I had been taught to answer when people asked me my name, "I am John the Baptist preacher!"

"Why didn't you tell me, Dad?" I asked. And he replied, "We wanted the Lord to tell you!" And the Lord did tell me, and I know now that "To this end was I born."

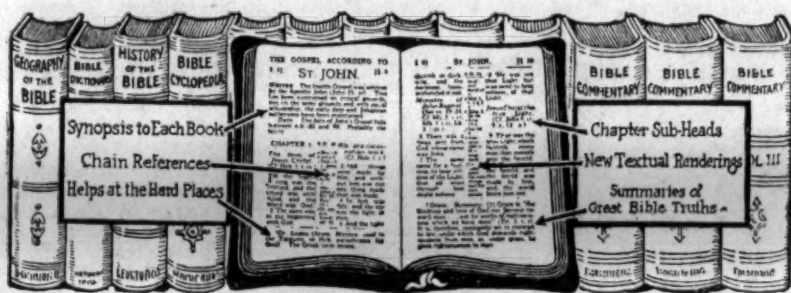
The burdens of the ministry are heavy enough sometimes, God knows. There is more to be done than any man can do. And any true preacher must lose friends for the sake of the bold, plain message that he preaches. There are tasks too heavy for any mortal man to do, and then there is, or ought to be, the unceasing pain in the heart which Paul felt for his brethren, the Jews, willing to be accursed from Christ, and which we must feel for the unsaved multitude, unthinking, unheeding but for whom the Saviour died. Yet there are joys and recompenses so that the work is easy and the bur-

den is light. There is the power of the Holy Ghost when human power fails. There is the very real presence of Christ even to the end of the world, when others forsake. And there is a pay day coming, more certain than Saturday night. And not the least of a Christian's joy is that joy which takes place in Heaven over a sinner saved.

Many a time I stand and plead with sinners to come to Christ, and they do, thank God, through the power of His gospel and the power of the Spirit. And when they come, sometimes with glad, uplifted faces and sometimes in tears, I know that in Heaven they make way for my mother and she gets a front seat in the grandstand of glory. I think I can almost hear her rejoicing as she sees her prayers being answered and her boy preaching the gospel! There is joy in Heaven. Since Heaven is so near, and since such a cloud of witnesses surround us, let us run our race with patience, laying aside the weights and our besetting sin of unbelief. Jesus will give us the soul winner's patience, the soul winner's faith, the soul winner's power while Heaven looks on. And one day we will share with them the soul winner's reward and enter more perfectly into the soul winner's rejoicing.

(Continued next week)

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